

# AB 2513 – CA Autism Information & Professional Development Center

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## Assemblymember Fran Pavley

### IN BRIEF

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Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to convene an advisory committee which will develop recommendations to improve autism instruction in California's public schools.

### THE ISSUE

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Autism is the fastest growing special education eligibility category for public education in California and the nation. In the four years between 1998 and 2002, the number of students receiving special education services in California almost doubled, from 10,360 to 20,377. These numbers have continued to climb at an alarming rate. In 2004, there were 4,427 additional students, an increase of 18 percent.

Autism is not a rare disorder. The recently completed National Survey of Autism found that 1 in every 175 children is afflicted with autism – this contrasts with the old estimate of 1 in every 2,000. Autism is a major public health problem that must be better addressed by the California Department of Education, the Department of Developmental Services, the Department of Social Services, the public school system, regional centers, and all other entities assisting children with autism.

Significant gains have been made in the expansion of research related to autism and related neurodevelopmental disorders and the findings of this research need to be more fully disseminated to parents, families, school districts, nonpublic schools and regional centers throughout the state.

### EXISTING LAW

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Requires every individual with exceptional needs who is eligible to receive educational instruction, to receive educational instruction, services, or both, at no cost to his or her parents.

### THE SOLUTION

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AB 2513 requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to convene an advisory committee (to be composed of parents of children with autism, school district administrators, teachers, representatives of county offices of education, representatives of special education local plan areas, representatives of nonpublic, nonsectarian schools and agencies, autism research specialists, physicians who possess a background or

expertise in a pertinent medical field, such as psychiatry or behavioral science, and individuals with a recognized expertise in the best practices for providing instruction to children with autism, and with input from the University of California, the California State University, relevant fiscal and policy committees of the Legislature, the Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism, and other appropriate entities) which will develop recommendations to improve autism instruction in California's public schools.

The bill specifies that the recommendations shall not interfere with existing IEPs or be imposed as standards.

The recommendations developed by the advisory committee will help school districts improve their education programs for students with autism – this will help student performance and could result in cost savings at the local level.

### BACKGROUND

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There is a significant body of research, including *Educating Children With Autism* by the National Research Council and *Increases Identified In Autism Spectrum Disorders* by the National Institute of Mental Health, that highlight the need to improve the dissemination of research-based recommended practices in autism research. This is critical if we are going to ensure that no child is left behind.

### SUPPORT

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National Association of Social Workers – California Chapter, California State PTA, Special Needs Network, Inc., CA Assoc. of School Psychologists, CA Assoc. of Suburban School Districts (CALSSD), Assoc. of California School Administrators (ACSA), CA School Boards Assoc. (CSBA), CA Assoc. of School Business Officials, Los Angeles County Office of Education, CA County Superintendents Educational Services Assoc., Las Virgenes USD, Los Angeles USD, Long Beach USD, Los Banos USD

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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